

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS

REF: BANGKOK 1292

SUMMARY. SEVERAL POLITICAL PARTIES RELEASED PARTIAL LISTS OF CANDIDATES OVER THE WEEKEND. NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) APPEARS READY TO TRY TO MAKE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL US MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM THAILAND AN ISSUE IN UPCOMING ELECTION CAMPAIGN. DEMOCRAT PARTY MOST POPULAR POLITICAL PARTY, ACCORDING TO POLL TAKEN BY STUDENTS IN SEPTEMBER 1975. US CLAIRVOYANT JEANE DIXON FORESEES ANOTHER DEMOCRACY IN ASIA COLLAPSING IN 1976. END SUMMARY.

1. VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES RELEASED OVER THE WEEKEND PARTIAL LISTS OF CANDIDATES WHO WILL RUN UNDER THEIR BANNER IN ELECTION. IT APPEARS ON FIRST EXAMINATION THAT ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF THE CANDIDATES IN THE APRIL 4 ELECTIONS MAY BE POLITICIANS WHO DID NOT RUN IN THE JANUARY 1975 GENERAL ELECTIONS. THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY (SAP) CONFIRMED THAT IT HAD ACCEPTED CHAISIRI RUANGKANCHANASET, DEPUTY COMMERCE MINISTER AND LEADER OF THE
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PEOPLE'S JUSTICE PARTY (PJP) INTO THE PARTY. THREE OTHER PJP

MP'S AS WELL AS THE SISTER AND BROTHER OF CHAISIRI ARE ALSO CANDIDATES ON THE PARTIAL SAP LIST MADE PUBLIC.

2. EFFORTS BY THE FAR LEFT TO MAKE A POLITICAL ISSUE OUT OF THE RESIDUAL U.S. FORCE PRESENCE ARE WELL UNDER WAY, AND ARTICLES ON THE SUBJECT HAVE SURFACED FROM TIME TO TIME IN THE LOCAL PRESS. ACCORDING TO THE BANGKOK POST OF FEB. 1, 1976, THE NATIONAL STUDENTS CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) IS ORGANIZING A CAMPAIGN TO "MAKE SURE THAT ALL AMERICAN TROOPS AND BASES IN THAILAND ARE WITHDRAWN BY MARCH 20." FROM ONGOING PRESS REPORTS ON SUBJECT, THE NSCT IS APPARENTLY AWARE THAT THERE WILL BE A SMALL RESIDUAL FORCE PRESENCE IN THAILAND AFTER THE MARCH 20 WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE. NSCT EVIDENTLY PLANS TO INSIST THAT THE WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT APPLY TO ALL U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL, REGARDLESS OF FUNCTION. THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN TO STATING THAT ALL "COMBAT" TROOPS WILL BE WITHDRAWN BY THE DEADLINE, BUT THE LOCAL PRESS HAS RUN SEVERAL CONFUSING AND CONFLICTING STORIES, WHICH MAY HAVE LED MUCH OF THE PUBLIC TO BELIEVE THAT THE WITHDRAWALS INCLUDES ALL U.S. FORCES.

3. IT IS DIFFICULT TO GUESS AT THIS POINT HOW MUCH INTEREST THE NSCT WILL BE ABLE TO RAISE AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT NOT BECOME AS BIG AS IT WAS DURING THE LAST ELECTION, WHEN U.S. TROOPS WERE HIGHLY VISIBLE. HOWEVER, THE NSCT STILL MIGHT BE ABLE TO PRESSURE SOME OF THE MODERATE POLITICAL PARTIES INTO CALLING FOR A TOTAL U.S. WITHDRAWAL. THE SOCIALISTS, NEW FORCE PARTY AND SENI PRAMOT, LEADER OF THE DEMOCRATS, HAVE ALREADY RAISED THE ISSUE OF COMPLETE U.S. WITHDRAWAL AND WILL PROBABLY USE IT THROUGHOUT THE COMING CAMPAIGN. IF THE PUBLIC DOES SHOW ANY INTEREST, OTHER PARTIES CAN BE EXPECTED TO JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON.

4. OUR CONSUL IN CHIANG MAI REPORTS THAT STUDENTS AT CHIANG MAI HAVE ERECTED LARGE SIGN FEATURING THE NUMBER OF DAYS REMAINING TILL FINAL WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES, WITH NUMBER CHANGED DAILY IN THE COUNTDOWN.

5. THE RESULTS OF A PUBLIC OPINION POLL CONDUCTED BY STUDENTS OF THE BANGKOK COLLEGE'S MASS COMMUNICATION COURSE IN SEPTEMBER 1975 WERE RELEASED OVER THE WEEKEND. EXCERPTS OF THE RESULTS WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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PUBLISHED IN THE NATION FEBRUARY 2. THE EMBASSY DOES NOT YET HAVE DETAILS ON HOW THE POLL WAS CONDUCTED BUT ASSUMES IT COVERS BANGKOK. WE HAVE EXTRACTED CERTAIN RESULTS WHICH TOUCH ON THE ELECTIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION. FULLER DETAILS WILL BE REPORTED WHEN AVAILABLE.

A. 61 PERCENT THOUGHT THE COALITION GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN DOING A GOOD JOB, WHILE 38 PERCENT TOOK THE GOVERNMENT TO TASK FOR

BEING WEAK AND FOSTERING DISUNITY AMONG CABINET MEMBERS.

B. THE DEMOCRAT PARTY REMAINED THE MOST POPULAR POLITICAL PARTY, WITH THE NEW FORCE AND SOCIAL ACTION PARTIES TRAILING CLOSE BEHIND.

C. 63 PERCENT SAID THAT LAW AND ORDER SITUATION WAS FAR FROM SATISFACTORY. REASONS GIVEN FOR THIS SITUATION INCLUDED THE PEOPLE'S LACK OF COMPREHENSION OF THEIR OWN RIGHTS (20 PERCENT); GOVERNMENT'S OVERLY COMPROMISING ATTITUDE TOWARD PRESSURE GROUPS (16 PERCENT); ECONOMIC HARDSHIP (15 PERCENT); INDIVIDUALS' IRRESPONSIBLE ATTEMPT TO SEEK PERSONAL FAME (13 PERCENT); LABOR DISPUTES (13 PERCENT); AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND SELFISHNESS (10 PERCENT). ONLY 6 PERCENT SAID OUTSIDE INFILTRATION HAD BROUGHT ABOUT SUCH A STATE OF AFFAIRS.

D. 65 PERCENT DISAGREED WITH A COALITION GOVERNMENT OF NUMEROUS POLITICAL PARTIES, BECAUSE SUCH A GOVERNMENT COULD NOT EFFICIENTLY ADMINISTER THE COUNTRY.

E. NATION HEADLINED STORY ON POLL, "U.S. POSES BIGGEST THREAT TO THAILAND." THIS REFERRED TO POLL QUESTION ON RANKING FOREIGN COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF DANGERS OF THEIR ACTIVITIES TO THAILAND. POLL SAMPLE AS PUBLISHED IN NATION LISTED U.S. FIRST (31 PERCENT), FOLLOWED BY SOVIET UNION (23 PERCENT), CHINA (22 PERCENT), JAPAN (20 PERCENT), AND VIET NAM (17 PERCENT). AS THESE FIGURES TOTAL 113 PERCENT, THERE APPEARS TO BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH STUDENTS' ADDITION, NATION ARTICLE, OR BOTH. POLL WAS TAKEN ON RANDOM SAMPLE BASIS.

F. INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, POLL REPORTED THAT 61 PERCENT OF THOSE RESPONDING SAID THEY WERE NOT REPEAT NOT SATISFIED WITH ACTIVITIES OF NSCT, USUALLY ON GROUNDS THAT STUDENT GROUP HAD INTERFERED CONFIDENTIAL

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WITH ACTIVITIES BEYOND THEIR BASIC FUNCTION--THEIR STUDIES.

6. ACCORDING TO THE NATION OF FEBRUARY 1, U.S. CLAIRVOYANT JEANE DIXON FORESEES ANOTHER DEMOCRACY COLLAPSING IN ASIA IN 1976, TO BE REPLACED WITH A DICTATORSHIP. IF MISS DIXON HAS THAILAND IN MIND, THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S APPROACHING MISS DIXON TO ASCERTAIN WHEN COUP WILL TAKE PLACE AND WHO NEW DICTATOR WILL BE.
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